



NOTES
September 20, 2001

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The September 20, 2001, meeting of the Education Telecommunications Council was held at Iowa Public Television with the following members present: Al Bode, ISEA; Jim Bodensteiner, Regents; Dean Borg, IASB; Merv Cronbaugh, IACCT; Kathy Decker, IAICU; Mary Gannon, IASB; Paul Bowers for John Hartung, IAICU; Connie Maxson, SAI; David Montgomery, DE/CIANS; Kathryn O'Shaughnessy, ISEA; Pam Pfitzenmaier, IPTV; Gail Sullivan, DE; and Mary Travillian, AEA Boards.

The following members were absent: Robert Barak, Regents; Gene Gardner, IACCT; Gary Hayden, AEA Boards; Kay Runge, DE/Public Libraries; and Mick Starcevich, SAI.

The following guests were also present at this meeting: Pat Thieben, RTC 11; Stacy Gibb, RTC 14; Ruth Husz, IWCC; Ellen Kabat Lensch, RTC 9; Kathy Guilgot, RTC 1; Robin Madison, Legislative Fiscal Bureau; Linda Abel, RTC 15; Roger Rezabek, RTC 7; John O'Connell, Dept. of Ed; John Haack, RTC 10; Mike Bacino, Tony Crandell and Dave Lingren, ICN; Theresa Zeigler, RTC 3; Jim Sutton, ISEA; Rick Seeley and Marilyn Drury, UNI; and Julie Thomas, RTC 6.

II. ISSUES AND UPDATES

II.A. ITTC Sept 13 Meeting Debrief

Pam Pfitzenmaier provided a summary of the ITTC meeting held on September 13, informing members of the outcome of the video rate discussion for the July 1, 2002, through June 30, 2003, time period. (The ITTC did not take action on any rate changes for the current school year).

As background information, Pam reminded members that at a special ETC meeting held on Friday, September 7, ETC members had voted to support an across-the-board increase in video rates of 5% for ALL authorized video users with the exception of the K-12 school and library use. Members supported \$12.20 per site/per hour for K-12 & library use assuming approved e-rate discounts.

At the September 13, 2001, ITTC meeting, the ITTC voted to increase regent universities' and independent colleges/universities' rates by 10% and community colleges by 5%. This differentiated rate increase was based upon the assumption that regents and independents were more likely to have more students per site than community colleges. Discussion followed concerning the video rate increase.

II.B. E-rate consortium application for interactive video

1. Consortium application process

2. Elements of potential support through e-rate

Pam Pfitzenmaier updated members on the e-rate application process for Year 5 (July 1, 2002, through June 30, 2003). Application for Year 5 will occur this fall. Training sessions for school district personnel is being scheduled for October through November. Community college personnel and AEA Media personnel have each had information sessions via ICN about the upcoming application process.

Prior to this year, telecommunications services provided by the Iowa Communications Network (long distance telephone and interactive video conferencing) were not deemed eligible for discounts by Iowa schools/libraries/AEAs per ruling by the Federal Communications Commission. A court decision overturned the FCC determination. ICN telecommunications services are now eligible for e-rate discounts. Internet services provided by the ICN always were considered eligible. The court ruling did not have any effect on that eligibility.

ICN bills each interactive video session much the same way that a phone conference call is billed. One authorized user gets a bill for all the sites that are involved in an interactive video session. Because that billing method does not mesh well with the e-rate program, advice was sought from the Schools and Libraries Division (SLD) of USAC regarding how application for e-rate discounts should be filed for Iowa schools and libraries. SLD determined that the Iowa Department of Education should file a statewide consortium application for ALL schools (public & private), libraries, and AEAs for Year 5. That means that Iowa schools/libraries/AEAs will not file either form 470 or form 471 for ICN video this year. Each school/library/AEA will get a letter in the mail in early November informing them that a). The Dept of Education is filing e-rate interactive video services for them and b). A "letter of agency" must be signed by the district superintendent/library director/AEA Chief Administrator giving the Dept of Education authorization to file on their behalf for interactive video services. Those schools/libraries/AEAs that do not complete a letter of agency will not receive discounts for interactive video. The Dept. of Education will work with the Dept. of General Services to meet the competitive bid requirements for the e-rate application. One of the requirements is a Request for Proposal must be filed.

For more information concerning e-rate, you may contact Pam via email—pam@iptv.org.

II.C. RTC budgets (10% being held back)

During the ETC meeting, a press release from Governor Vilsack's office was issued and passed around to members and guests. The Governor recommended that various state budgets, including the RTC budgets, be cut by 7% over current fiscal year 02 budget levels. Based upon earlier information from the Governor's office, IPTV was withholding 10% of the budgeted funds until such time as the Iowa General Assembly took final action on the FY02 budget.

RTCs are instructed to develop a contingency plan to use 90% of the budgeted funds (rather than 100%) in case the General Assembly not only affirms the Governor's recommended 7% cuts but increases the cuts to a higher level. If the cuts actually are lower than 10%, the remainder of the RTC funds will be remitted to the RTC.

Questions about this decision should be sent to Pam via email or phone-pam@iptv.org, or 515-242-4180.

II.D. Update on 21st Century Infrastructure

1. Pilot project...Marilyn Drury

2. Research project...Paul Bowers/Rich Gross

Marilyn Drury of the University of Northern Iowa provided an update on the 21st Century Learning Infrastructure (21CLI) pilot project that began last year with an appropriation from the Iowa General Assembly. UNI was designated the role of Project Management and has been working with the Information Technology Department, Dept. of Ed., and the ICN, as well as adding IPTV this year to the oversight group. Funding for the 21 Century Initiative was increased by the legislature this year to \$1.5 million.

During the past year, there were 7 pilot schools and 13 teachers involved in the project. This year, AEAs 11, 12, and 13 will be added and 10 to 12 schools from these areas will be selected to join the pilot project. The focus of the project will remain on middle school math. Project management is working closely with AECM (software buying consortium through the AEAs) to help with the selection of content for this upcoming year. Project management has licensed the some products and has requested that AECM look for further math resources that are good quality and meet the criteria and standards in state and national levels, and to provide recommendations for additional purchases for this upcoming year.

As for the technical side of the infrastructure, project management is making sure that each pilot school has at least two T-1s. Working closely with the ICN last year, the ICN provided those T-1s to the schools at no cost to the schools or project management. However, this year, project management will share the cost with the ICN for those T-1s needed at selected pilot schools. (Note to readers: Most Iowa elementary and middle schools do NOT have direct ICN connections. Any T-1 capacity and above must be leased from local telephone companies).

For more information about this pilot project, you may contact Marilyn Drury (Marilyn.Drury@uni.edu). You may also find more information on the ITD web site at <http://www.infoweb.state.ia.us/21/>.

Paul Bowers updated members on the research side of the 21st Century Learning Infrastructure Project. He stated that a report will be finalized and submitted in the next week or so. One of the items noted in the report is the need for a broad coalition of educators at all levels of education to be involved in this project, at the very least in an advisory role. The ETC is a body that already exists and the report will recommend a role for the ETC in this project. That will require some discussion among the ETC members and a possible change in the charge and mandate of the ETC.

On the infrastructure and technical side of the project, the report will contain an architecture or plan that will explain what the 21CLI looks like, both from a technical standpoint and a user standpoint. Two of the areas highlighted in the report are accessibility and connection to the 21CLI. For more information about this report, you may contact Paul Bowers (bowers@bvui.edu) or Rich Gross (rdrich@earthlink.net).

II.E. Upcoming Part III lease expirations

Pam Pfitzenmaier opened this discussion with an overview of the upcoming Part III leases that will begin to expire in August 2002. She suggested that a study group with an active interest in the Part IIIs (K-12s and public libraries) be pulled together to meet with ICN staff to determine what recommendations should be made—1). Should Part III sites continue with the same technical specs as previously and recommend that the ICN sign a 1 year lease? 2). If the ICN decides to go to bid for new leases, should the RFP be “future looking” and revise the technical specs?

In addition, Pam suggested that the ETC focus on the unmet needs of elementary and middle schools. Because these sites are, in most cases, not physically connected to the ICN, the bandwidth for current and future needs to these sites is often very expensive, if even available at all. While Part I, II, and III sites have costs that are not dependent upon distance and are equitable regardless of location, elementary and middle schools (Part IV) do not have the same equity in cost. Pam expressed concern that we have an unresolved equity issue with K-8 facilities.

Pam recommended that the study group be formed that consists of representatives from IASB, ISEA, AEAs, SAI, DE, public libraries, and technical representatives and colleagues from higher education who have expertise in technologies and bandwidth requirements for desk top videoconferencing and streaming video, as well as future technologies. Chair Mary Travillian asked for volunteers. Members of the ETC who volunteered to be a part of this study group are: David Montgomery, Mary Gannon, Al Bode, Gail Sullivan, and Pam Pfitzenmaier who will head the study group. Mary Travillian will select an AEA rep and Connie Maxson will select an SAI rep. Kay Runge will be contacted regarding a library rep. Paul Bowers and Rich Gross will also be a part of this group. Pam will provide a synopsis of the charge of this group to everyone concerned, following the release of the 21st Century report by Paul and Rich (expected in mid-October).

II.F. Update on RTC online reporting

Kathy Borlin reported on the status of the RTC online reporting system. She has received several RTC progress reports and feels that inputting the data will work satisfactorily (all “worms” aside).

Kathy also stated that there should be plenty of information for the Iowa legislature this year as she has successfully pulled archived data from the VOSS system for Fall 2000 and felt that Spring 2001 data gathering should be just as successful. She plans to have a report ready later this fall.

If RTC coordinators/chairs have questions about the RTC online reporting, they should contact Kathy (kathy@iptv.org or 515-242-4173,)

II.G. Update on Internet issues (Internet providers, router issues and recent outages, Communications with end users about recent outages)

Mike Bacino updated members on two items: a). The recent Internet problems; and b). The second OC-3 for Internet from Sprint. The current Internet providers for the ICN are AT&T (at OC-3 capacity) and Sprint (also at OC-3 capacity). Following the addition of the second OC-3 it was discovered that more bandwidth was needed and an emergency procurement was initiated.

The ICN contracted with Genuity (owned by Verizon) for 1 year to provide a third OC-3. The service with Genuity is scheduled to be turned up the first part of October. Dave Lingren of the ICN informed members about the router problems at the ICN that have been causing some of the Internet outages. He stated that initial problems occurred when the Sprint OC-3 was turned up and basically the routers being used were unable to communicate with one another. Through lengthy troubleshooting, ICN found that the different types of equipment from multiple manufacturers were unable to communicate correctly. Once this was determined, all the manufacturers and the ICN worked to correct the problems, only to be thwarted once again when the Nimda virus hit. While the virus did not affect the Internet servers themselves, it did affect the VOSS scheduling system. As a result of the Nimda virus infecting VOSS, the ICN staff asked network administrators at the local level to go into their web-based or LAN-based servers to see if they were infected. If they were infected, network administrators were asked to remove any files called admin.dll with a date of 9-18-01 since those were the infected files. Further the administrators were asked to build a batch file that will stop any future admin.dll files dated 9-18-01. They also asked the network administrators with email servers to remove all files that are readme.eml files dated 9-18-01—they are infected files, and to build batch files to eliminate any future readme.eml files from entering.

The ICN has started a listserve called “INFO” to allow broader communication with those folks who have Internet concerns and invited anyone involved with network operations to provide Dave Lingren with their email address so they may be kept informed. Dave suggested sending a business card or an email to him expressing your wish to be included in this listserve. You may contact Dave Lingren via email at this address: dave.lingren@icn.state.ia.us.

II.H. Wireless research

Tony Crandell of the ICN provided members with “fact finding” project concerning wireless technology. A work group of higher education, state agencies, AEAs, and other interested authorized users was pulled together, headed up by Tom Shepherd of ITD. This work group that is engaged in “fact finding” meets at least once per month to investigate the use of wireless technologies for various purposes. The work is still in the investigation stage. It is likely that a meeting will be held in the near future to provide more details about wireless technology and to hear from private sector vendors about how their wireless services might meet the needs of various educational and governmental needs. (A meeting originally scheduled to discuss a draft RFI was later cancelled).

II.I. Quorum for ETC meetings

Mary Travillian informed members of an issue that was brought to her attention concerning the vote that took place at the special meeting on Sept. 7. An ETC member questioned whether there was a quorum at the time of the vote. The vote was taken with only 9 members present, even though 12 members had previously indicated they planned to attend. Following a brief discussion it was determined that a quorum for ETC shall be 10: There are 18 members on the ETC so a majority would be 9 plus 1—10 members for a quorum. Members reaffirmed the vote on the ITTC proposed video rates from the earlier meeting in September with a vote as follows: Ayes—11, Nays—0, Not Voting—0, Absent—7. Reaffirmation of previous vote was passed unanimously.

Following the reaffirmation vote, a discussion was held concerning alternates for ETC members and the voting rights for alternates. Per ETC rules established several years ago, alternates for

ETC members may be designated by the appropriate appointing agency (Department of Education, IASB, SAI, Community College Trustees, Board of Regents, Iowa Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, ISEA, IPTV, AEA Boards). It is up to the appointing agency to determine whether the alternate has voting rights (past practice indicates that when an appointing agency designates an alternate, they have been given voting rights as well). Not all appointing agencies have chosen to designate alternates, however.

At the Chair's request, Debbie Fiscus will work with members and their appointing agencies to determine if the appointing agencies all have alternates with voting rights and will produce a document detailing members about the current alternate/voting status.

II.J. Executive committee membership appointments

Mary Travillian reminded members that per the ETC meeting of June 2000, the new ETC chair for the current year shall select an executive committee. This executive committee is to consist of the current ETC chair, the immediate past chair, the chair-elect and a balance of members representing the various constituent groups. In addition, the executive committee is to consist of both long-time ETC members as well as a balance of newer members. The executive committee shall not constitute a majority of members.

Mary reminded members that the executive committee does not have any decision-making authority. Rather the executive committee serves the chair as a "sounding board" in setting the agenda, advising as to whether special ETC meetings are needed, and other advice to the chair upon short notice.

Mary informed members that the executive committee she appointed for September 2001 through September 2002 time period was selected to be gender balanced, education level balanced, includes 4 seasoned members and 4 newer members. The new executive committee appointments are effective immediately and include the following members:

Al Bode, past ETC chairperson, representing ISEA
Mary Travillian, current ETC chairperson, representing AEA Boards
Robert Barak, chair-elect, representing Board of Regents
Mary Gannon, representing IASB
Merv Cronbaugh, representing IACCT
Gail Sullivan, representing DE
John Hartung, representing IAICU
Pam Pfitzenmaier, facilitator and notetaker (not a formal member of the executive committee)

II.K. Open discussion with ETC members about telecommunications issues

Mary Gannon informed members of IASB's intent to pursue the "adopt a penny state-wide for school infrastructure" project. IASB has hired 5 field staff to work on this project—Harold Overmann, Don Hansen, Steve Williams, and Larry MacBeth (all are former Iowa superintendents) and Karen Peterson, a former school board member. Mary asked all at the meeting to support this issue and promote it at every opportunity.

Pam Pfitzenmaier shared information about a study committee that was created last year by Iowa General Assembly to study distance learning. Pam will forward any information concerning this committee's meeting schedule and agenda as it is made public.

II.L. Open discussion with RTC members and guests about telecommunications issues

Kathy Guilgot shared her concerns about the funding cuts for RTCs. Discussion followed.

Roger Rezabek reminded members of the SAI vacancy on RTC 7 and the problems he has had attempting to get it filled. Debbie Fiscus will work with the RTC members and the appointing agencies to get the vacancies filled and the membership records updated. Updating RTC membership rosters will be included on the ETC planning calendar for the month of October.

III. ADJOURNMENT

The September 20, 2001, meeting of the Education Telecommunications Council adjourned at 11:43 a.m. The next meeting of the ETC will be December 20, 2001, at Iowa Public Television.

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